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DEPT FOR P, EUR/WE, NEA, PM, AND IO

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TAGS: [MARR](#) [MOPS](#) [PREL](#) [SP](#) [LE](#)
SUBJECT: SPAIN REAFFIRMS CONTRIBUTION TO UNIFIL

REF: A. MADRID 1962

[1](#)B. SECSTATE 134133

Classified By: A/DCM Whitney Baird for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C/NF) As described in ref A, Spain intends to deploy approximately a battalion of troops to UNIFIL. Acting DG for Defense Policy Brigadier General Jose Munoz Castresana told Poloff on August 17 that Spain shares the US's sense of urgency and generally agrees with ref B's points. He said that Spain is committed to supporting the mission, and that the figure of 700-800 troops which has discussed in the local press is probably the minimum that Spain would ultimately contribute. Munoz said that Spain currently has an officer at the UN participating in force generation discussions. He noted that this officer would soon go to Lebanon to evaluate the situation. Munoz said that, with these discussions ongoing, it is too soon to say exactly which troops Spain will deploy and how they would arrive in Lebanon.

[1](#)2. (U) President Zapatero said on August 16 that Spain will send troops when there is "a real cease-fire," fulfillment of all parts of UNSCR 1701, and guarantees as to how the mission will develop operationally. Defense Minister Alonso said on August 16, after meeting with top GOS officials including the Chief of Defense and the head of the national intelligence service, that "Spain is an important country of medium size in the international community and we will contribute our share." According to press reports based on unnamed Spanish MOD sources, the GOS prefers that troops from western countries work along Israel's border while troops from Muslim countries work in the north. Additionally, it wants UNIFIL to focus on preventing armed forces from occupying areas south of the Litani River rather than trying to disarm the Shiite forces.

[1](#)3. (U) The governing Socialist Party, opposition Popular Party, and far left IU all support Spanish participation in Lebanon. Preliminary government approval for the deployment is likely to come at the Council of Ministers' meeting on August 25, although it is possible that an emergency meeting may be held prior to that date. After Council of Ministers' approval, parliamentary approval is also necessary before troops can be deployed. The press quotes military leaders as stating with "utmost certainty that Spain will have military troops in the area before September 15."
AGUIRRE